# A SMART GROWTH FUTURE FOR PEMBROKE

## Presented to THE NEW HAMPSHIRE OFFICE OF STATE PLANNING

As part of the GrowSmart NH Tool-Kit Project

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By Planning Decisions, Inc. www.planningdecisions.com

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### A. Introduction: The Need for Smart Growth

New Hampshire is currently growing "at a rate approaching 15,000 people each year." This growth makes New Hampshire the vibrant state it is; it brings new jobs, new people and new ideas. At the same time, however, it also brings new challenges.

Unmanaged, this growth threatens to destroy the very qualities that make New Hampshire a great place to live.

Sprawling growth moves away from our town centers, leaving downtowns struggling. It spreads residential development across the rural landscape on large lots, eliminating the farms and woodlots of the working landscape--the pieces that are the very essence of rural character. The resulting pattern of development leaves islands of single uses widely spread apart from each other. In many areas the automobile becomes the only logical way of reaching these far-flung districts. Instead of the traditional mixed use patterns of development, where at least some residential development was directly accessible to downtowns that provided a variety of commercial, industrial, and institutional activities, we have residential subdivisions and office parks far outside of downtown. Instead of small-scale retail centers, we have stores and retail complexes hundreds of thousands of square feet in size, surrounded by acres of parking. In doing so, we are losing any traditional, distinctive New Hampshire character.<sup>2</sup>

Sprawl in its simplest terms is growth of land use that exceeds growth of population. Sprawl is bad because it is expensive — it increases the cost of municipal services and thus taxes; it destroys the traditional land uses of forestry and agriculture; it makes us more dependent on the automobile, thus increasing traffic, congestion and air pollution; it increases water pollution; it reduces wildlife habitat; and it destroys the small town, rural character that is so much a part of New Hampshire's birth right.

Sprawl occurs not because of the malevolence of developers or the incompetence of government. Developers respond to market forces within the rules established by state and municipal governments. At times, however, the rules are not coherent, consistent or logically linked to the goals they are intended to realize. Sometimes rules designed for one desirable purpose have unintended, undesirable, consequences. For example:

• Planning Boards and other municipal bodies are under increasing pressure to "do something" in the face of growing population pressure and increasing tax rates.

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> NH Office of State Planning Report to Governor Shaheen on Sprawl, December 1999. p. 1.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> <u>Ibid.</u>

- Many towns have had unpleasant experiences with poorly planned and hastily executed "affordable" housing projects and "cluster" developments that have made them gun-shy about new ideas for growth management.
- While the goals of "Smart Growth" may be clear by contrast to sprawl— it's everything sprawl is not the practical guidelines for putting these theoretical ideals to work are few and far between.
- The myriad of existing regulations often have unintended consequences which tend to impede the realization of "Smart Growth" goals:
  - ß 3 acre zoning intended to preserve a rural flavor results in fields full of suburban homes:
  - ß Lot coverage and parking regulations intended to prevent squalor result in downtowns with empty second and third floor spaces;
  - B Use regulations intended to protect health in a residential area results in limits on farming that hastens the loss of large tracts of working open space.

In short, for "Smart Growth," the devil truly is in the details.

The central focus of the "GrowSmart NH" project is to bridge the gap between theory and practice and provide a usable link between the principles of Smart Growth and their application in municipalities.

This report is a first step for providing that link for the town of Pembroke.

#### **B.** What is Smart Growth?

The forces of change are enormous and seem to come from all sides—more people, more traffic, changing jobs, higher taxes—and they seem impossible to understand and control—the global economy, new threats to environmental and personal health, changed cultural and moral values. Given these pressures, it is understandable that taxpayers and communities often respond with a loud "STOP!" Growth caps, tax caps, budget cuts, all are natural responses to situations that appear overwhelming. What "Smart Growth" counsels here is not to jump to any particular "solution," but rather to step back and look at the essential qualities of the community. At base, Smart Growth is an affirmation of those values that constitute the character of an area, of the values that determine its:

### • Sense of Place

What are the places and qualities, both natural and human-made, that give the community its character? What is the feeling that arises from living in the community? What are residents proud to show visitors? What reflects the community's history? What reflects the community's attachment to its woods, fields, rivers, streams and ponds?

### • Sense of Community

How do people in the community know and feel about one another? What factors, both physical and social, shape their interactions? Where do people gather? Shop? Vote? Celebrate? Play?

#### • Sense of Economy

What does the community feel it can afford? What does it want for itself, and what is it willing to spend to get it? How does the community shape public policy, and how do members of the community participate in decision making?

Smart Growth says, "First, decide on your vision. Then explore the possible ways to achieve it." In practical terms, "Smart Growth" consists of evaluating and shaping all new development and re-development initiatives according to the following eight principles:

- 1. Maintain traditional **compact settlement** patterns to efficiently use land, resources and infrastructure investments;
- 2. Foster the traditional character of New Hampshire downtowns, villages, and neighborhoods by encouraging a **human scale** of development that is comfortable for pedestrians and conducive to community life;
- 3. Incorporate a **mix of uses** to provide variety of housing, employment, shopping, services and social opportunities for all members of the community;
- 4. Provide **choices and safety in transportation** to create livable, walkable communities that increase accessibility for people of all ages, whether on foot, bicycle, or in motor vehicles;

- 5. Preserve New Hampshire's **working landscape** by sustaining farm and forest land and other rural resource lands to maintain contiguous tracts of open land and to minimize land use conflicts;
- 6. Protect **environmental quality** by minimizing impacts from human activities and planning for and maintaining natural areas that contribute to the health and quality of life of communities and people in New Hampshire;
- 7. **Involve the community** in planning and implementation to ensure that development retains and enhances the sense of place, traditions, goals, and values of the local community; and
- 8. Manage growth locally in the New Hampshire tradition, but **work with neighboring towns** to achieve common goals and address common problems more effectively.

### C. Smart Growth and Pembroke

### 1. Pembroke's Essential Qualities

At the invitation of their Planning Board and its growth management sub-committee, eighty-four Pembroke citizens gathered on Tuesday evening, April 16, in the Pembroke Academy cafeteria to discuss the future of their town. They divided into seven small groups and shared their ideas about Pembroke's best qualities and its best natural and built features. Several notable conclusions emerged from this exercise. First, without any apparent collaboration, all seven groups cited very similar "favorite things." Second, analysis of this list reveals that the 74 "favorite things" listed can be boiled down to seven basic qualities.

Table 1
Pembroke's Best Qualities

#	quality	citations
1	nature of people/community	16
2	small town character	16
3	historic design	10
4	open spaces	10
5	quality of government services	8
6	convenient location	7
7	rivers	5
8	other	3

Quality #1 has to do with the character of the people of Pembroke. Participants clearly felt very positively about their neighbors and their community.

- "closeness of community"
- "community spirit"
- "friendly people"

These types of qualities were cited 16 times.

Quality #2, also cited 16 times, had to do with small town character,

- "Rural"
- , "Quiet"
- "Good place to raise kids."

Interestingly, the next two qualities were also equally common. Quality #3 related to the historic character and design of the town and was cited 10 times. Quality #4 related to open space and was also cited 10 times.

Together, these citations paint a picture of a community:

- deeply committed to both the quality of its social interactions and to the small town/historic character of its built environment;
- generally satisfied with the quality of public services provided by its government;

aware of its fortunate location and of the importance of its water resources, both the three rivers that border the town and the ponds and streams that run through its center.

In a second exercise conducted on April 16, participants listed their favorite natural and human-made features. These are listed in Tables 2 and 3 below.

### Table 2 Pembroke's Favorite Natural Places

**Row Natural Feature** citations votes Bragfield Pond area along 3rd range road Suncook River Merrimac River Merrimac River white sands at base of Donna Rd. Old Conference Center, woods & views agricultural area off Buck St near Ryan Drive Soucook River Whittemore hayfields old bottled water pond off Academy Road agricultural area, N. Pembroke Rd. (farms & Blake's maple syrup) ponds w/ blue herons off Church Rd. view from Plauswa Hill Rd. (NE) view from Rt 3 at Concord line woods around and across from Deer Path Lane agricultural area off Buck St before Dearborn Road Chickering's field off Pembroke St. Memorial Field pond & paths off Brickett Hill Rd. beyond Third Range Road ponds/wetlands between 5th & 6th Range Roads Soucook River waterfalls/fishing/kayaking undeveloped land at Beacon Hill & Fourth Range Roads view from French's Corner (NW) Whittemore conservation area wooded area between 3rd & 7th Range Roads (everything) woods & ponds between Buck St. & Kimball Rd. agriculture, horse farms along 4th Range Road field E of Rt. 28 near Epsom line Merrimac River railroad walk mill pond near N. Pembroke & Cross County Roads sand pit below the confluence of Soucook & Merrimac Suncook River waterfalls near village Suncook River where Robert Frost wrote poem Town well N of Sand Rd. view from Brickett Hill Rd. beyond Third Range Road (NW) view from Brush Rd. (NW) view from Pembroke St. across from Bean Hill Rd. (E) view from Pembroke St. S of Whittemore Homestead (E) view from Rt. 106 beyond Sand Rd. (NW) walk along Church road woods along Sixth Range Rd. NW of Cross Country Rd. woods at 3rd Range Rd. & Belanger Dr. (Donaghey tree farm)

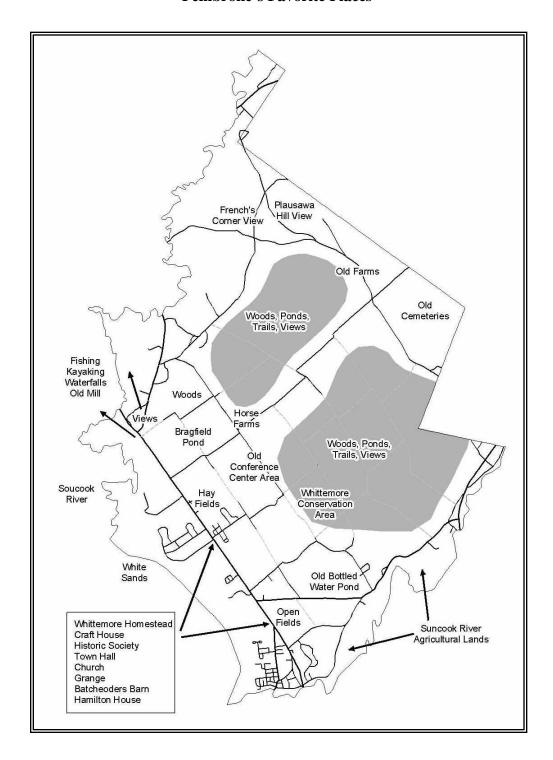
### Table 3 Pembroke's Favorite Built Places

row	Human-Made Feature	citations	votes
1	Pembroke Street, Grange/Little Red School House	7	4
2	Pembroke street, Whittemore House, including watering troughs	6	
3	Suncook Village District, brick architecture	5	14
4	Pembroke Street, Hamilton House/Kimball Tavern, 1780	5	
5	Pembroke Street, old homes & historic buildings all along street	4	12
6	Suncook Village, double decker bridge	4	7
7	stone walls all through town	4	2
8	Plausawa Country Club, w/ view	4	1
9	Suncook Village, Memorial Field	4	1
10	Cemetaries throughout town	4	
11	Pembroke Street, Congregational Church	4	
12	Suncook Village, Emerson Mills	4	
13	Town Pound	4	
14	Pembroke Street, Pembroke Academy, old section	3	1
15	Pembroke Street, Historic Society School House	3	
16	Pembroke Street, Pembroke Park	3	
17	Suncook Village , clock tower	3	
18	Suncook Village, Village School	3	
19	Commercial spaces along Rt. 3 & Rt. 106	2	6
20	Pembroke Street, cemetary	2	2
21	Cemetary on N. Pembroke Rd.	2	
22	Pembroke Street, monument near Pembroke Academy	2	
23	Pembroke Street, Town Hall	2	
24	Suncook Village Veterans Park	2	
25	Pembroke Street, Duffy House	1	2
26	Range Road layout	1	1
27	Soucook River, old mill at falls	1	1
28	Cemetary along 4th Range Rd.	1	
29	Cemetary along Rt. 28	1	
30	Diehl's farm (underground RR)	1	
31	Old agricultural buildings throughout town	1	
32	Out buildings to Phipps House, along Thompson Road	1	
33	Pembroke Street, Anderson Barn	1	
34	Pembroke Street, Batchelder's barn	1	
35	Pembroke Street, Berkstrum House	1	
36	Pembroke Street, carriage way near Greco House & Hall	1	
37	Pembroke Street, Greco House & Hall	1	
38	Pembroke Street, Lange's ice cream (w/ view)	1	
39	Pembroke Street, old Dr. Frost house	1	
40	Pembroke Street, Phipps House, 1825	1	
41	Suncook Village Main Street	1	
42	Suncook Village, Craft house, 1764	1	
43	Suncook Village, dams on river	1	
44	Suncook Village, water works building, old school house	1	<u> </u>
45	Suncook Village, Waumbac Mills	1	
46	Watering troughs at Nixon Rd. & Buck St.	1	l

On the whole, the variety of "favorite" natural places cited by participants illustrates a pattern of protecting the interior wooded lands and the external river valleys that form the town's boundaries.

Pembroke's most important human-made features are concentrated along Pembroke Street and in Suncook Village. The feature garnering the most "votes" was Suncook Village with 14, followed by Pembroke Street in general with 12 and then the double-decker bridge with 7 "votes." Interestingly, the commercial/industrial property along Rt. 106 received 6 "votes," perhaps in recognition of the importance of generating new sources of tax revenue to help preserve other parts of town. It is also interesting to note that the various specific places along Pembroke Street reflect the variety of valued structures in location just as the various specific natural places cited in the range roads area reflect the variety of valued natural places in the interior of Town. The locations of these "favorite things" are illustrated in Figure 1.

Figure 1 Pembroke's Favorite Places



### 2. The Forces for Change in Pembroke

Throughout the 1980's, Pembroke saw its population grow 35% and its housing stock increase 40%, hitting a peak of 234 new housing units in 1985 alone. For much of the 1990's, in contrast, Pembroke grew slowly. Population grew only 5%, and housing units only 8%. Table 4 lists some of the indices of this more moderate growth.

Table 4
Growth of Housing, School Enrollment & Tax Commitment in Pembroke, 1990 to 2001

<b>Year</b>	<b>Housing Units</b>	<b>School Enrollment</b>	<b>Tax Commitment (th\$)</b>
1990	2,543	1,158	\$6,200
1991	2,555	1,120	\$6,791
1992	2,567	1,139	\$6,824
1993	2,577	1,180	\$6,906
1994	2,595	1,182	\$7,734
1995	2,610	1,202	\$7,627
1996	2,627	1,183	\$7,937
1997	2,644	1,174	\$7,938
1998	2,664	1,231	\$8,690
1999	2,716	1,237	\$7,447
2000	2,761	1,162	\$8,365
2001	Not Available	1,176	\$9,386

Sources: Housing units and school enrollment from New Hampshire Office of State Planning; tax commitment from NH Department of Revenue Administration.

Housing starts ranged from ten to twenty; school enrollment stayed basically stable; and municipal expenditures jumped in 1991, 1994 and 1998, then dropped in 1999 before jumping again in 2000 and 2001. This pattern is seen even more readily in Figure 2 that depicts the changes for each of these variables from a common starting point of 1990 = 100.

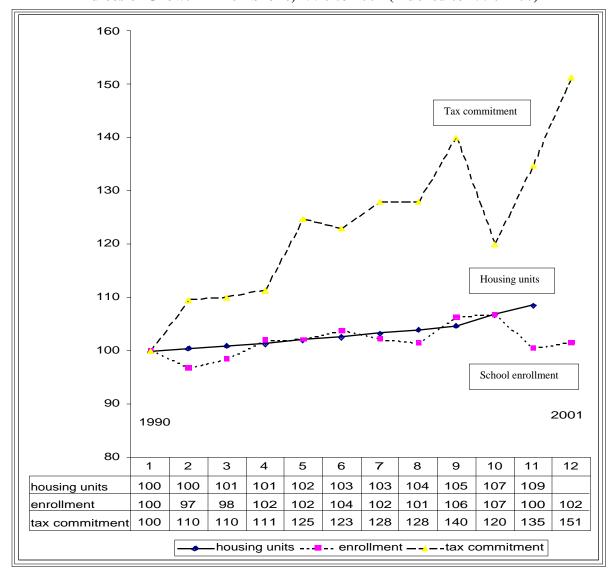


Figure 2 Indices of Growth in Pembroke, 1990 to 2001 (indexed to 1990=100)

Clearly, housing starts and municipal expenditures begin to rise after 1996. The most intriguing figure for Pembroke is school enrollment. From 1990 to 2000, the number of households in Pembroke increased by 8.1%, but the number of family households with their own children under age 18 grew by only 4.1%. At the same time, the average number of children under age 18 per family dropped from 1.9 to 1.8. Should this trend continue, Pembroke will be able to count on continued stable school enrollment. If, on the other hand, the new housing being constructed in Pembroke attracts more families with children, then enrollment will undoubtedly climb. The most recent enrollment projections prepared by the Pembroke School District show an expected increase of 3.8% (68 students) in 2001/02 and 2.5% (47 students) in 2002/03.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> U.S. Bureau of the Census Profile of General Demographic Characteristics 1990 and 2000.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> Pembroke School District Enrollment Projections October, 2001.

As with all communities in the I-93 corridor, the central challenge to the citizens of Pembroke over the next 20 years is how to preserve the qualities and places they hold so dear in the face of the powerful forces for change they will face over the coming two decades. The very qualities of friendly people, small town atmosphere, historic design, open spaces and convenient location so precious to today's citizens of Pembroke are sure to draw more people in the future. Table 5 presents a summary of these projected changes.

Table 5 **Indices of Projected Change in Pembroke, 1990-2020** 

Pembroke	1990	2000	I-93 Study 2020 avg.
<b>Total Population</b>	6,561	6,897	9,570
% pop 65+	8.4%	9.0%	16.5%
pop 65+	551	621	1,579
% pop 18-64	64.3%	66.1%	61.5%
pop 18-64	4,219	4,560	5,886
% pop under 18	27.3%	24.9%	22.0%
pop under 18	1,791	1,716	2,105
<b>Total Households</b>	2,444	2,661	4,131
% HH w/ indiv 65+	14.9%	19.0%	30.6%
HH w/ indiv 65+	364	506	1,263
% HH w/ indiv under 18	39.0%	39.4%	36.4%
HH w/ indiv under 18	953	1,049	1,504
People per Household	2.68	2.59	2.32
Total Housing Units	2,536	2,734	4,255
Reporting Employers	101	115	267
Reported Employees	1,108	1,288	3095

Source: US Bureau of the Census <u>Decennial Census of Population, 1990</u> and <u>2000</u>. Parsons,Brinkerhoff Quade & Douglas, Inc. for the New Hampshire Department of Transportation

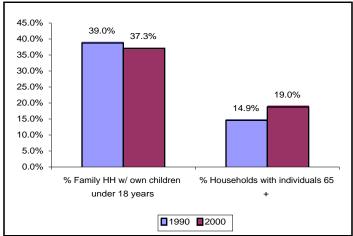
<u>I-93 Manchester to Salem, Expert Panel Analysis, Final Report</u>, January 22, 2002.

Based on a combination of ongoing growth and the additional effects of the widening of Interstate 93, Pembroke is likely, over the next two decades, to see:

- Its population grow by nearly 40% to about 9,600 people;
- Its housing stock grow by 50% to over 4,200 units; and
- Its in-town employment more than double to over 3,000 people.

One of the most important factors that will affect the future character of Pembroke is the nature of the Town's household composition. Figures 3 and 4 below illustrate this issue.

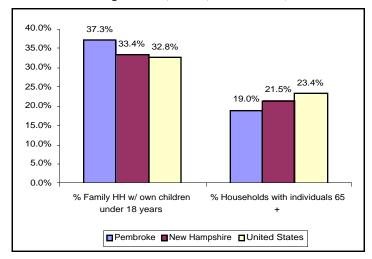
Figure 3
<a href="Pembroke">Pembroke's Household Composition, 1990 and 2000</a>



Source: US Bureau of the Census Decennial Census of Population, 1990 and 2000.

Between 1990 and 2000, the share of all households in Pembroke made up of families with their own children under age 18 fell from 39% to just over 37% while the share of households including individuals over age 65 increased from just under 15% to 19%. Should this trend continue, it will have significant implications both for the demand for housing in town and for likely future school enrollment. In this regard, Pembroke's household composition is becoming more similar to state and national averages.

Figure 3 Household Composition, 2000, Pembroke, N.H. & U.S.



Source: US Bureau of the Census <u>Decennial Census of Population</u>, 1990 and 2000.

Even after the changes of the 1990's, Pembroke's household composition still shows an above average share of households with children and a below average share of households with elderly. To the extent that new housing created in Pembroke over the recent past has been larger, single family homes, this demographic disparity can be said to be the result of housing supply.

Looking to the future, the major point to be made is that there is a clear relationship between housing availability and household composition. Household composition, in turn, affects the nature of demand for municipal services and thus the tax rate. Demographically, there is no doubt that the aging baby boom generation will mean a larger portion of all households will be in the 65+ category and thus that there will be an increased demand for the housing most desired by those households. At the same time, the widening of Rt. 93 and the volume of buildable land available in Pembroke means that the town will remain attractive to the larger, family oriented, suburban style housing development desired by families with children under age 18.

In short, given these two different types of demand for housing, Pembroke has an opportunity to shape its future character through the nature of the incentives and disincentives its development ordinances offer to different lifestyles and their associated housing types. While growth is inevitable, its impact is not. Through careful analysis of these policy decisions, Pembroke can have a substantial impact on making its future the one it wants.

### D. Suggestions for a Smart Growth Future for Pembroke

The central purpose of the GrowSmart NH Tool-Kit Project is to help communities evaluate their development policies and regulations in light of the concepts and examples of "Smart Growth." In the case of Pembroke, Planning Decisions reviewed the town's Master Plan as well as its zoning ordinance, its subdivision ordinance and its site plan review ordinance. This review is presented in the attached report, <u>Pembroke and New Hampshire's Principles for Smart Growth.</u>

On the whole, Pembroke's ordinances are neither consistent nor inconsistent with the principles of Smart Growth. Rather, they are generally silent about most Smart Growth concepts or address them only indirectly. Pembroke's Master Plan calls for "preservation and protection" of lands "inappropriate...for development." It also calls for "new retail activities to locate in Suncook Village." Both of these goals are consistent with Smart Growth. At the same time, however, it calls for the encouragement of "a lower density of development in those areas remote from town services." While apparently complementary to the goals of concentrating development in Suncook Village and protecting open space, this goal, as it has been implemented, has produced, and threatens to continue to produce, exactly the opposite result—suburban sprawl. The reason is that the two-acre minimum lot size requirement of the R-3 zone that covers the vast majority of the town puts open space, working agriculture and suburban residential development into direct competition. To set density and use requirements for a zone implies that development of all useable land in that zone to those standards is acceptable, or even desirable. To say that a residence may be put on any build-able two acres in the R-3 zone is tantamount to saying that construction of residences on all build-able two acres in the R-3 zone is what the ordinance envisions. Clearly such an outcome contradicts both the other goals of the Master Plan and the desires of the participants in Community Meeting One.

In short, while portions of Pembroke's Master Plan make reference to concepts that are consistent with Smart Growth, the Town's zoning and development ordinances encourage the conventional suburban development that is consuming so much of New Hampshire's open space. It is true that simply allowing a free market for land does not "encourage" residential development. However any analysis of the demand for housing versus that for the products of New Hampshire's traditional rural industries will show which sector is likely to be the winner in that competition over the foreseeable future. Planning Decisions' assessment of these ordinances, therefore, is that their overall impact is not to foster Smart Growth. To do so they should include more explicit reference both to the principles of Smart Growth explained above and to the goals and values articulated by so many Pembroke citizens at the two community meetings that began this project. More specific evaluations are included in the suggestions listed below.

It is important to preface these suggestions with the warning that Smart Growth will not result from re-writing zoning ordinances. Rather, it will result from the creative interaction of citizens, developers and community officials. The primary stimulus to this creativity is imagination. If people think of development only in terms of the rules under which they currently operate and

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> Town of Pembroke Master Plan, 1993, amended October 1998, p. 6.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup> Ibid., p. 7.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>7</sup> Ibid. p. 6.

the projects they have already seen, little will change. If, on the other hand, they think about new ideas, decide which they like, which fit with the "essential values and qualities" that define their town, they can adjust the rules to fit the good ideas. In order to stimulate the imagination of Pembroke's citizens as they undertake the process of revising their Master Plan we make the following suggestions. Our purpose is not to say, "This is what you should do," but rather, "Think about this." Watching as hundreds of highly committed and energetic Pembroke citizens wrestled with these issues, it became evident that one barrier to new solutions is lack of familiarity with the range of possibilities. The purpose of the following suggestions is to broaden Pembroke's vision of that range of possibilities and to provide food for thought to a community obviously deeply committed to dealing with the issues that will shape its future.

### 1. Encourage Revitalization of Suncook Village.

Sprawl is driven by many factors. Some factors pull people out to the country – elbow room, peace and quiet, lower taxes, cheaper housing, better schools, etc. Other factors push people out of built-up areas – concerns about safety, noise, traffic, high taxes, poor schools, and public services, etc. To combat these factors, Smart Growth requires that existing built-up areas remain attractive, vital places where people want to live, work, shop, and play. Local regulations, programs and capital investments need to facilitate the continued use, reuse, and redevelopment of these built-up areas. This facilitation should be based on an urban or village model rather than on inappropriate "suburban" regulations. Regulations need to encourage infill development and rehabilitation in ways compatible with existing development patterns and pedestrian-oriented design. The first four principles of Smart Growth listed above—compact settlement, human scale, mix of uses and choices in transportation—all speak to maintaining what Pembroke already has in Suncook village. The challenge to the town is how to keep and enhance this downtown and surrounding village area. To do this, Planning Decisions offers the following suggestions:

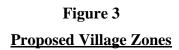
- Create a new village residential zone (RV-1) to match the proposed "high density residential" area not included in zones B-1 and B-2 in the existing Master Plan.<sup>8</sup> (See Figure 3 below).
- Change the lot and frontage minimums for residential use in the B-1 and new RV-1 zones served by town water and sewer to 7,500 SF plus 4,000 SF per additional unit with 80 F frontage.
- Establish a Village Maintenance Fund to provide public parking and recreational facilities to serve Suncook Village and require developers to pay into it an amount equivalent to 75% of the difference between the land cost of a development undertaken under these new lot/frontage requirements and the land cost that would have been required under the current lot/frontage requirements.<sup>9</sup>
- Make retail & service uses complementary to neighborhood and downtown needs permissible on arterial roads in the RV-1 zone, including mixed uses combined in one building.<sup>10</sup>
- Encourage second and third floor uses of buildings in the downtown area.
- Establish design standards to maintain the architectural integrity of the Suncook Village area in the same way that the Pembroke Street design standards are intended to maintain the architectural integrity of the area 500 feet from the center of that road.
- Require residential developments in the RV-1 zone to include curbs, esplanades, sidewalks, tree plantings and interconnected roads.

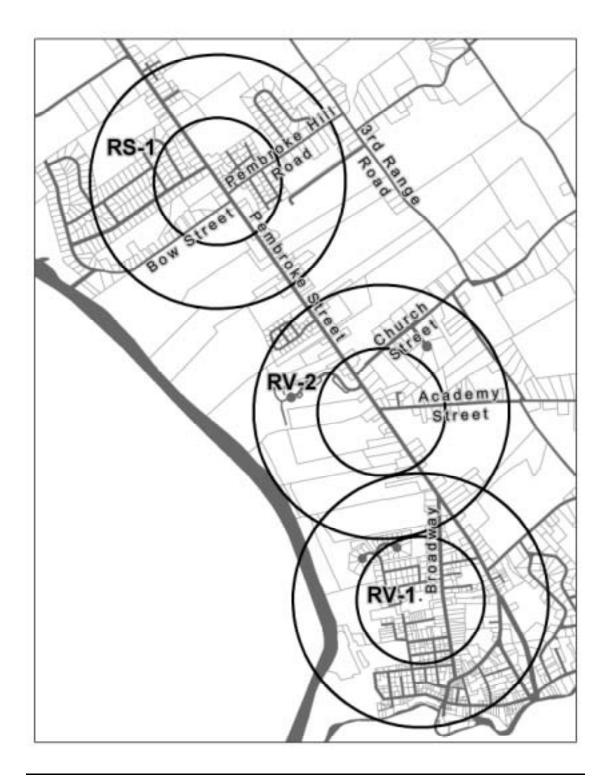
A Smart Growth Future for Pembroke

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>8</sup> Pembroke's current Master Plan (Map 5 in Appendix D) shows an area intended for "high density residential" use extending from the river to the intersection of Broadway and Pembroke Street and encompassing all of the area from Simpson Ave. on the west to Tina Dr. on the east. Currently, approximately 80% of this area is zoned R-1, requiring 20,000 SF lots with 120 F frontage for each unit.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>9</sup> If 10,000 costs \$10,000, then a 25% reduction in the lot size requirement will save a developer \$2,500. Our proposal calls for this gain to be divided between the developer and the Village Maintenance Fund. <sup>10</sup> Uses 1, 2, 3, 10 and 12 as listed on page 14331/2 of the Town of Pembroke zoning ordinance.





- Establish a municipal commitment to build non-arterial road pedestrian and bike connections between existing and new developments in the RV-1 zone and from these developments to the Village Elementary School, to the Memorial Field area, along the Merrimac River and to the Academy Street area.
- Establish a municipal commitment to provide a safe, clean, convenient location for the Concord Area Transit (CAT) bus terminus in Suncook Village as well as several well-marked, regularly scheduled stops along Pembroke Street.
- Establish a municipal commitment to provide initial design and renovation consultation services to owners of existing buildings in the Suncook Village area who are considering major re-investments.
- Establish a Downtown Parking and Traffic subcommittee of the Planning Board to work with property owners, merchants, residents and police to identify transportation problems and help to resolve them.

### 2. Enhance the "traditional village" character of the Pembroke-- Church St. area.

Pembroke has a well-established municipal/cultural/religious center around the intersection of Pembroke and Church streets. In addition, virtually all the participants in Community Meeting One expressed a strong commitment to maintaining the current "historic" design and flavor of the entire length of Pembroke Street (Rt. 3). This commitment is further reflected in the creation of an architectural design district running the entire length of Pembroke Street. Planning Decisions suggests that the best way to preserve and enhance the current character of Pembroke Street is to minimize the number of new roads and driveways cut into it by concentrating new residential and complementary commercial and service development around the existing municipal service center. This area should strive to attain a village flavor by incorporating a public common and by maintaining a pedestrian orientation throughout

- Create a new RV-2 zone extending from the edge of Suncook Village (the new RV-1 zone) to Sherwood Meadows on the west side of Pembroke Street and as far as sewer service reaches along Academy Street, including the architectural overlay district along Pembroke Street as far as Pembroke Hill Road. (see Figure 3, above)
- Set lot and frontage minimums for residential use in this RV-2 zone to 10,000 SF plus 5,000 SF per additional unit with 100 F frontage.
- Require residential developments in this zone to include curbs, esplanades, sidewalks, tree plantings and interconnected roads.
- Establish a municipal commitment to build pedestrian and bike path connections between this new neighborhood and the Suncook Village developments and assure frequent and regular stops by the CAT busses servicing this area.
- Permit no new curb cuts onto Pembroke Street in this zone by requiring all developments to connect to an existing access road. Redesign traffic flow along Rt. 3 through this area to slow traffic, increase pedestrian safety, encourage public transportation and enhance the "village" character of the area.

- Allocate funds from the Village Maintenance Fund to the creation of pocket parks in this zone.
- Encourage the development of elderly and other special purpose & special care residential units in this zone.
- Encourage commercial and service uses complementary to the municipal, cultural, and religious character of the area.

Both suggestions 1 and 2 embody a number of the smart growth principles listed in Section B—pedestrian orientation, human scale, mix of uses, transportation options. To help visualize these concepts in an idealized way, Planning Decisions offers the following hypothetical plot plan. It is not intended to be an actual development. Rather it should serve as a standard of comparison against which to evaluate those proposals that will be presented in the future.

Figure 4

Idealized Village Neighborhood



This idealized "village neighborhood" incorporates the following Smart Growth concepts:

• Relatively small lots to encourage concentrated development;

- Interconnected streets to encourage both interior vehicular traffic and pedestrian traffic;
- Interior pocket parks and other open space;
- Proximity to schools and recreation areas to encourage walking;
- Neighborhood oriented commercial and retail activities along the exterior streets;
- Sidewalks with trees and esplanades to enhance the pleasure of walking;
- Street oriented homes with porches to enhance the neighborly feel, which was Pembroke's number 1 rated favorite quality.

Planning Decisions suggests that Pembroke develop a street plan for this area to guide development and help insure that its eventual form meets the needs expressed by its citizens.

# 3. Create a new "suburban residential" zone (RS-1) in the area between Pembroke Street and Third Range road running from Bricket Hill Road to Pembroke Hill Road and from Bow Lane to Whittemore Road (see Figure 3 above).

Smart Growth Principle #3 calls for development and re-development to include a "mix of uses." This means providing a mix of housing types and costs. Clearly the demand for housing in the I-93 corridor is currently driven largely by the desire for suburban, family type residences. Virtually all new residential construction in Pembroke over the past several years has been single family. This trend is reflected in the fact that the percent of households with children under age 18 is far higher in Pembroke than in either New Hampshire or the U.S. as a whole (37% vs. 33% and 32% respectively). Furthermore, demand for this type of housing is likely to increase as the effects of widening I-93 spread and the qualities of Pembroke become better known. Planning Decisions suggests that the best way for Pembroke to accommodate this continuing demand is to encourage it in the area where it has already begun.

- Establish a municipal commitment to complete sewer service throughout this area.
- Zone this area according to the current R-1 standards.
- Require new developments to include roads connecting to existing developments so as to prevent new curb cuts into Pembroke Street.
- Establish a municipal commitment to re-align the intersections of Bow Street and Pembroke Hill Road into Pembroke Street to improve sight lines, safety and traffic flow.
- Require developers in this area to upgrade 3<sup>rd</sup> Range Road (including the additions of hiking and bike paths) to enable local residents to get to the municipal, cultural, religious, education center around Church Street without going onto Pembroke Street.
- Allow development of residential lots on the north side of 3<sup>rd</sup> Range Road only on lots directly fronting on 3<sup>rd</sup> Range Road.
- Require developments in this area to provide interconnected roads (including hiking and biking paths) so as to minimize the curb cuts into 3<sup>rd</sup> Range Road.

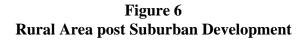
- Strengthen the municipal commitment to prevent development of 3<sup>rd</sup> Range Road between Beacon Hill Road and Brickett Hill Road so as to prevent 3<sup>rd</sup> Range Road from becoming an alternate thoroughfare to Pembroke Street.
- Work with Concord Area Transit (CAT) to ensure a regular stop near the intersection of Pembroke Hill Road and Pembroke Street.

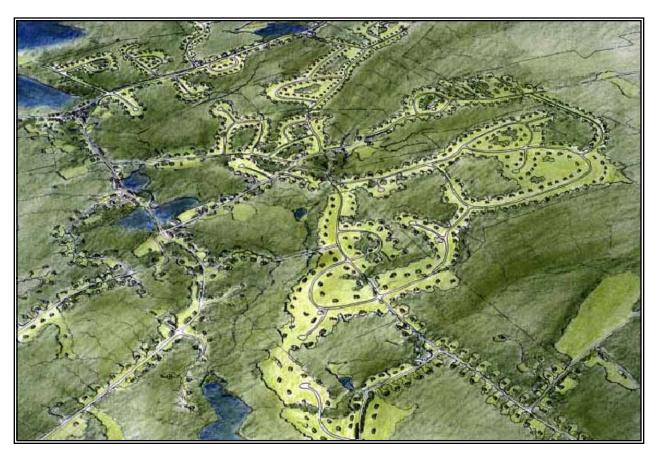
### 4. Create a "traditional New England" village in one or two rural areas.

The single greatest threat to the open space Pembroke citizens hold so dear is the unchecked spread of suburban style housing developments utilizing the 2 acre minimum lot size currently permitted under the Town's zoning ordinance. Figures 5 and 6 illustrate the nature of this change.

Figure 5 Rural Area pre-Development

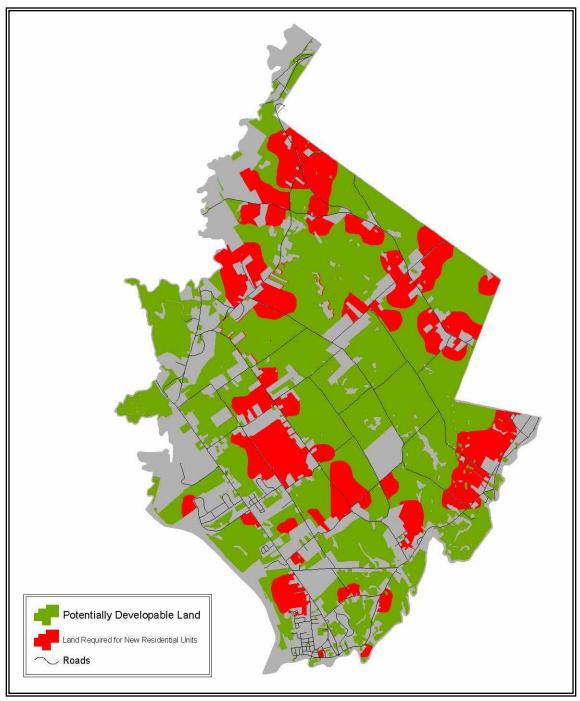
Source: South County Design Manual, Rhode Island





These illustrations are merely suggestive of the changes that demand for suburban housing is bringing to Pembroke. Another way of looking at this potential change is to examine the land use required for the location of new housing suggested or expected by the participants at the Town's first GrowSmart NH meeting. At that meeting, participants were asked to identify the "best" places to locate 1,500 new housing units to be built in Pembroke over the next 20 years. By taking the weighted average of the new housing dots placed on town maps by participants at the seven tables, Planning Decisions calculated a land consumption requirement as illustrated by the darkest areas in Figure 7.





Simply put, the demand for suburban housing that exists in and around Pembroke will, unchecked over time, consume much of the town's developable land into the two acre lots permitted under the current R-3 zoning requirements. One way to prevent (or at least slow) this trend is to encourage the revitalization of Suncook Village, establish the mixed-use Pembroke Street village and the suburban residential developments described above. Another way is to select an area to become a new village and concentrate most rural development around it. Several such areas are noted on Figure 8 below. Based on the energetic discussions stimulated by this idea at Community Meeting Two, any specific location will have to be the result of considerable community conversation. Figure 8 suggests several possibilities by placing circles indicating 1/4 mile and 1/2 mile walking radii. The point of this illustration is to encourage the town to consider concentrating new rural residential development rather than allowing it to spread randomly based only on the ability of willing buyers to find willing sellers of rural land. More specifically, Planning Decisions suggests that Pembroke

- Create a rural village article in the zoning ordinance along the lines of the existing cluster ordinance but with several major differences. The purpose of the article would be to allow the Planning Board to entertain proposals for a rural village proposal without establishing a specific zone or specific lot and frontage requirements. 11
- Allow a rural village development to include a variety of lot sizes and limited non-residential as well as residential activities.
- Require developers to pay into an Open Space Conservation fund, an amount equal to the difference in land costs between what would be required under two acre per lot zoning and what actually is required under the approved village plan.
- Require developers to build community water/waste systems to town specifications for a village development.
- Amend the existing Rural Open Space Cluster Development to allow clusters that are included in Rural Village Development:
  - o to allocate the dollar value of their open space requirement to the Town Open Space Preservation Fund; and
  - o to remove the requirement that all owners of a unit in a cluster be members of a cluster specific owners association.

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>11</sup> Examples of such an ordinance can be found in Randall Arendt <u>Crossroads, Hamlet, Village, Town: Design Characteristics of Traditional Neighborhoods, Old and New American Planning Association, Planning Advisory Service Report Number 487/488, September 1999 and at <a href="http://www.fairviewvillage.com/main.html">http://www.fairviewvillage.com/main.html</a> which describes a village ordinance in Oregon.</u>

### 5. Create an open space preservation overlay zone.

Figure 8 highlights two large tracts in the range road area. These are noted in Appendix D, Map 4 of Pembroke's current Master Plan as areas "proposed" to remain "undeveloped." This proposal is clearly consistent with the wishes of virtually all participants in both Community Meeting One and Community Meeting Two, but there is no assurance, under current regulations, that this "proposal" will in fact be realized. Planning Decisions, therefore, suggests that these two areas as well as the area bordering the river corridors and greenways that might be created to connect all of these high priority open space areas be included in a new R-4 zone targeted for open space preservation.

- Establish a municipal commitment that funds acquired from developers given lot size allowances below current standards be allocated to purchasing land or development rights in this area.
- Establish an Open Space Preservation subcommittee of the Planning Board to work with private land trusts and other organizations devoted to open space preservation to encourage them to devote their efforts to the land in these tracts.
- Establish 10 or 20 acre minimum lot size requirements in this zone and require all lots to have individual access to town roads so that any development in this zone will create no additional town roads.
- Establish a Rivers Corridor Overlay District with more stringent storm runoff controls and other measures necessary to protect the water quality valued so highly in Meeting One.

Possible Smart Growth Development 0.25 mile radius 0.5 mile radius To Remain Undeveloped: 1993/1998 Master Plan French's Corner View Old Farms Old Woods, Ponds, Trails, Views Cemeteries Fishing Kayaking Waterfalls Old Mill Horse Bragfield Woods, Ponds, Trails, Views Pond Òld Conferènce Center Area Soucook Whittemore Fields River Conservation Area White Old Bottled 6 Sands Water Pond Open Whittemore Homestead Suncook River Craft House Agricultural Lands Historic Society Town Hall Church Grange Batcheoders Barn Hamilton House

Figure 8
Pembroke's Favorite Places with Potential Village Areas Circled

### 6. General Zoning Changes

The overall thrust of the above suggestions is to encourage Smart Growth by recognizing specific goals of the town and creating specific zones and mechanisms to encourage desired growth. At the same time, Planning Decisions recognizes that not all growth will occur in these zones or consistently with these goals. We therefore offer these final two more general suggestions.

- Amend section 143-3 of the zoning ordinance to reflect the concepts of Smart Growth This section now is oriented almost entirely to the dangers of overcrowding. It reflects the fears of squalid tenements, calling for the ordinance to "lessen congestion," "prevent overcrowding," and "avoid undue concentration of population." While these are legitimate concerns, so are loss of open space, environmental degradation, loss of community interaction and the increasing tax costs of supplying services across a wide suburban landscape. These concerns ought to be given equal voice in stating the purpose of the zoning ordinance.
- Seek permission from the state to amend section 143-94 of the zoning ordinance to incorporate the increased operational costs of new development as well as the increased capital costs. Section 143-91 of the zoning ordinance says that that the intent of impact fees is to prevent development of land that would "necessitate the excessive expenditure of public funds to supply [town] services" (emphasis added). While "excessive" is a rather subjective term, the assessment methodology makes clear that the intent is to cover the "municipal capital improvement costs...reasonably related to the capital needs created by the development." This is fine as far as it goes. It is obvious, however, that operational costs as well as capital costs are increased by new development. More roads have to be plowed and maintained. Maintenance must occur more often because of increased use. One theory here holds that once the development is built and has paid its share of the capital costs required to create it, operational costs become common and are shared across everyone based on equal assessments on property value. If, however, the marginal cost of providing additional services is increasing (more overtime to plow and maintain roads, a new truck), the effect of the new development is to raise the average cost to everyone. Therefore, adding to the impact fee an amount equal to the discounted present value of the additional operational costs generated by the new development would incorporate the true costs of development more fully into the cost of the new lot or new house. 12

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>12</sup> New Hampshire law currently allows impact fees to be assessed only for increased capital expenditures, so implementation of this suggestion would require a change at the state level.

### E. Results of Meeting Two Survey

At the second Smart Growth meeting, held on May 21, Planning Decisions presented an early version of the recommendations presented in Part D above. After the presentation, participants broke into small groups to discuss these ideas. After the discussion, they were asked to rate the growth management ideas presented, 1 being their favorite proposal to 5 being their least favorite proposal. Table 7 below presents the results of that survey. They should be evaluated with two major caveats. First many participants voted reluctantly, citing a desire for more information. Many wanted more information on specific lot sizes, on the type of population to be served and on the impact of development on roads, traffic and schools. Second, many treated the mixed use development as a vehicle for citing a desire for more business development. Eleven voters explicitly said "no residential" alongside their vote for "mixed use." These votes are listed separately in Table 7, but they bring into question the intent of the other 39 votes for this proposal. Since the intent of the proposal was to include residential in this idea, these votes may not reflect an accurate evaluation of its standing in Pembroke.

Table 7
Rating of Smart Growth Proposals

			0					
Proposal	bost (1)	(2)	(2)	(4)	worst (E)	total votes	total	avg
Proposai	best (1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	worst (5)	votes	score	score
Village Infill Development	21	12	7	7	3	50	109	2.18
2. Broadway Area Neighborhood Development	7	11	14	11	3	46	130	2.83
3. Pembroke Hill Area Residential Village Development	5	4	14	16	5	44	144	3.27
4a. Mixed use Development	10	11	5	10	3	39	102	2.62
4b. Industrial Commercial Development	6	3	2	0	0	11	18	1.64
5. Rural Village Development	1	6	7	7	28	49	202	4.12

Remembering that the lower the score means the more popular the proposal, the *most* popular was one created by the eleven participants who rated "mixed use development" as their number

one choice and specified "no residential." This clearly represents a desire for more commercial and industrial development in the town. Combining these votes with those who voted for "mixed use" without comment, yields a total score of 2.4, putting "mixed use" just below "village infill." However, because of the strong possibility of participants treating this as the only proposal including non-residential development, it cannot be taken to mean support for a truly "mixed use" (meaning a development including a residential component).

The other notable conclusions from the survey are that "village infill" with a score of 2.18 was clearly the favorite of the participants and that "rural residential village" with a score of 4.12 was clearly the least favorite proposal. The Pembroke Street neighborhood proposal proved to be slightly more popular (2.83 vs. 3.14) than the Pembroke Hill Suburban Village proposal, but both had a wide dispersion of votes.

Perhaps the most significant conclusion to be drawn from Meeting Two is the desire for more information. Many participants found the proposals and discussion "interesting" and "provocative," but felt the need for more information, particularly on the tax consequences of the various proposals. In the sense that it has stimulated a community dialogue that leads to further work to examine Pembroke's future, the meeting can be said to be a success.